St. Chrysostomos the New and Episcopal Consecrations: Why Did He Not Leave Bishops to Succeed Him?[1]

by Nikolaos Mannes[2]

One of the most important factors in history is emotional sensitivity,[3] a point which is consistently corroborated by research into history,[4] and especially Church history. The reasons why Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Phlorina did not leave any successors are primarily matters of emotional sensitivity, though these *are not the only reasons.* But before we see why he did not

[1] This article, which the author directs to an active theological writer and well-known opponent of the calendar innovation and critic of the ecumenical movement, Demetrios I. Katsouras, is of special interest to those scholars within the Old Calendar movement who seek to understand its past, its challenges, and its principles in an objective manner. It centers on the reasons that St. Chrysostomos the New, former State Church Metropolitan of Florina and veritable Father of the movement, after so heroically serving the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, reposed without providing future Bishops for it. Rather, the Episcopacy was reëstablished by the intervention of some rather heroic and saintly Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, then in exile from the fierce and brutal religious persecutions of the Soviet authorities in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution. With slight emendations and several explanatory footnotes marked as those of the "editor," we present this essay as an enlightening antidote to the many amateurish, polemical, and largely inaccurate approaches to the question that it poses—*Editor.*

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[3] That is, personal sentiments, emotions, historiographical sensitivities, etc.—*Editor*.

[4] R.G. Collingwood (†1943), the Oxford professor, historian, archaeologist, and philosopher, very strongly makes this same point in his reflections on history and insights into historical perception and emotion or affect, important factors in human history that once again, today, historians and psychologists, alike, are examining—*Editor.*

consecrate other Bishops, let us look first at why he consecrated the four Bishops that he did in 1935.

It has been proved beyond doubt (and there exists every evidence for this) that the calendar innovation of 1924[5] was uncanonical (that is, unlawful) and arbitrary. As the New Calendarist historian of the State Church of Greece, Father Theokletos Strangas, has demonstrated with incontrovertible data, in his seven-volume work *History of the Church of Greece*, the Church of Greece was governed in that period by the Archbishop of Athens, Chrysostomos (Papadopoulos) (†1938), on his own, though supposedly acting as the representative of the Holy Synod; indeed, a Holy Synod, or rather a semblance thereof, which had become such on account of the political conditions of the time and the interference of the Greek State in Church affairs. (These matters are clearly put forth in the second volume of Father Theokletos Strangas' aforementioned work.)

Chrysostomos (Papadopoulos) was a fanatical instigator of the calendar change, which the State (influenced by Freemasonry[6]) ardently desired, not reckoning the cost that this would entail. Thus, after he had first deceived the Holy Synod (by saying that the entire Orthodox Church would accept the New Calendar and that the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which was to take the lead in this change, should not be isolated or remain without support), he then pressured the Œcumenical Patriarchate (with the help of the government) to accept the change in the calendar, which he presented as the allegedly fervent desire of the Holy

[5] This was when Greece set aside the Julian Calendar, which had been used by the Orthodox Church worldwide, throughout its history, to determine the calendar for Church Feasts and the date of Pascha, and adopted the Gregorian (Papal) Calendar—*Editor.*

[6] Let us note for American and some western European audiences that, putting aside clear and strict canonical restrictions against membership by Orthodox in para-ecclesial fraternal organizations, such as Freemasonry, and the significant deviation of many of the "theological" precepts of the Masonic movement from Orthodox doctrine, we are not speaking of the mostly benign "brotherhoods" of Freemasonry in the West, but of agents of radical social change and instigators of destructive political machinations, working within the organizational framework of international Freemasonry, who played a rôle, at the time in question, in compromising and toppling nations and traditional societies, especially in the Balkans and Eastern Europe—*Editor.*

Synod.[7]

When the traditionalist Hierarchs started gradually to realize the scheming of Papadopoulos and saw, on the one hand, the increasing resistance of the faithful to the change and, on the other hand, the refusal of the majority of the other local Orthodox Churches to alter the Church Calendar, they began to react. Bishops such as Germanos [German, or in its Slavic form, Herman] of Demetrias, Eirenaios of Kassandreia, Basileios [Basil] of Drama, Chrysostomos (*emeritus* Metropolitan) of Phlorina, and Basileios of Dryinoupolis entered into open opposition and demanded the restoration of the Old Calendar.

In 1933, Panages Tsaldares, who had promised to reinstate the Old Calendar, became Prime Minister (aided by the votes of the Old Calendarists).

With this in mind, and fearing lest the schism among the Orthodox Greeks become entrenched (since Chrysostomos [Papadopoulos] was intransigent in his opposition to the reinstatement of the Old Calendar), the conservative Hierarchs decided to act, so as to bring back the Old Calendar immediately and to restore the unity of the Body of the Greek Church.[8]

This plan entailed the following successive steps, designed to exert pressure for the sake of achieving the desired result:

1) Three Bishops (Germanos of Demetrias, Chrysostomos of Phlorina, and Chrysostomos of Zakynthos) would join the ranks of the Old Calendarists and would issue a canonical denunciation of the official Church as being in schism [on account of the cal-

[7] Concerning the incredible machinations of Chrysostomos (Papadopoulos), see *Ἡ Πραγματικὴ Ἀλήθεια περὶ τοῦ Ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ Ἡμερολογίου* (The real truth about the Church calendar), by Gregorios Eustratiades.

[8] Metropolitan Chrysostomos writes in this regard: "It must be affirmed that we were led to this decision not because we were pursuing personal aspirations and ambitions, as the Archbishop of Athens put about right from the outset, but because we were hoping in this way to compel him to summon the Hierarchy and to submit to its judgment the document whereby we severed communion with the State Church and, as well, the entire calendar question in general. We never imagined that the Ruling Synod would expel us from our thrones without due canonical process, as appointed by the Canons and the Constitution, and declare us, heretofore Metropolitans, as subject to trial before a Synodal tribunal" ("Τὸ Ἡμερολόγιον ἐν Σχέσει πρὸς τὴν Ὀρθόδοξον Ἀνατολικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν" [The calendar in relation to the Eastern Orthodox Church], March 31, 1938.).

endar change].

2) The remaining conservative Hierarchs (Basileios of Drama, Basileios of Dryinoupolis, Eirenaios of Samos, Prokopios of Hydra, Gregorios [Gregory] of Chalkis, and Hierotheos of Akarnania) were to assist this movement from within the State Church.

3) There were at the same time hopes that the Patriarchates and the local Churches, [the vast majority of] which followed the Old Calendar, would endorse this stand.

4) Similarly, there were hopes that the government would support it and fulfill its promise [to return to the Old Calendar].

5) In addition, after ten days had elapsed from the disavowal of the official Church [again, for having uncanonically replaced the Church Calendar], during which time the aforementioned Hierarchs were to perform no sacerdotal act, the Consecration of four new Bishops (intentionally to be given the titles of now defunct, though formerly eminent, dioceses) would serve to exert additional leverage.

The goal of all the foregoing, as we have said, was that of pressuring the official Holy Synod into restoring the Old Calendar immediately or, in the worst case, at least into giving the Synod of the Old Calendarists provisional recognition, pending a definitive resolution on the part of a Pan-Orthodox Synod.

The primary goal of this endeavor, to wit, the restoration of the Old Calendar, failed for many reasons. (It is not possible to analyze all of them in the present article.) Chief among them was the position of the government, which proves, first, that Freemasonry (which had been controlling the State for more than a century) did not want any such thing to happen and, secondly, that only through a separation of the Church from the State could ecclesiastical issues be resolved.

As we can see, the Consecration of four new Bishops, Germanos (Barykopoulos), Polykarpos [Polycarp] (Lioses), Christophoros, [Christopher] (Hatzes), and Matthaios [Matthew] (Karpathakes), who received mere titular Sees, was [in its conception] part of the plan for unifying the Church, and was not an end in and of itself.[9]

[9] St. Chrysostomos states: "Bearing in mind the Canons and the Constitution, we were led, from the [subsequent] proclamation of our depositions without due process [!], to the conclusion that the Ruling Synod had acknowledged the document in which we declared our severance of communion, in which case it was incumbent upon us, as the provisional eccle-

The rupture of communion that the leaders of the Hierarchical movement brought about in 1935 does not, strictly speaking, fall into the category of walling-off on account of heresy, but constitutes rather a praiseworthy scission, which aimed at an immediate resolution of the problem.[10]

This move, risky though it was, would have, had it succeeded, delivered the Church from divisions and schisms brought on by the calendar reform, and the division of the Orthodox flock of the Church of Greece into New Calendarists and Old Calendarists would have been eliminated.

However, it failed, and so it was that Chrysostomos of Za-

siastical authority of the Old Calendarists, to provide for their religious needs, chief of them being the appointment of Bishops for the specific provinces in which there were concentrated groups of Old Calendarists. This is why we proceeded to consecrate four Bishops, as we had the right to do on the basis of the divine and sacred Canons. We performed these Episcopal Consecrations to fill the religious needs of the eight hundred or more communities of Old Calendarists in the various provinces, and also in order to enable the Ruling Church and the Government to grasp and evaluate appropriately the sobriety of our enterprise, which aimed at the removal of scandal and the union of Christians through the restoration of the age-old Orthodox Festal Calendar bequeathed by Tradition" (*ibid.*).

Elsewhere, Metropolitan Chrysostomos makes the following admission, in keeping with his refinement of character and candor: "We admit that this step [the Consecration of new Bishops in 1935] was hasty and, from a canonical standpoint, fraught with the risk of putting the cart before the horse, but we undertook it, ever hopeful that our Hierarchical Council, cleaving steadfastly to the venerable institutions and traditions of Orthodoxy, would be recognized, albeit according to ecclesiastical *oikonomia*, by the other Orthodox Churches until a valid resolution by a Pan-Orthodox Synod of the calendar issue, the matter under dispute" (Metropolitan Chrysostomos, "Ὑπόμνημα Ἀπολογητικὸν ὑπὲρ Ἀναστηλώσεως τοῦ Πατρίου Ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ Ἡμερολογίου" [Memorandum in defense of the restoration of the traditional Church calendar], 1945).

[10] The Orthodox break communion not only for reasons of Faith, but also for violations of the Canons that impinge on dogma. The opposite is maintained today by apologists for the New Calendar Church, who are afraid to wall themselves off, even in view of the heresy of ecumenism, from those who uphold it. Concerning mandatory and praiseworthy scissions, see Hieromonk Theodoretos, *Κανονικὴ Θεώρησις τοῦ Ἡμερολογιακοῦ Σχίσματος* (The calendar schism from a canonical standpoint), pp. 15-19, and *idem, Τὸ Ἡμερολογιακὸν Σχίσμα: Δυνάμει ἢ ἐνεργείᾳ;* (The calendar schism: potential or actual?), in which he records some of the praiseworthy scissions in Church history, pp. 10-11.

kynthos, together with the newly consecrated Christophoros of Megara and Polykarpos of Diauleia, returned to the official Church.

The remaining Hierarchs carried on the sacred struggle, which continued to have as its primary goal the union of those worshipping in accordance with the traditional Festal Calendar.

In 1937, however, the other two newly consecrated Bishops, Germanos of the Cyclades and Matthaios of Bresthene, disavowed those who had consecrated them, Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostomos of Phlorina, and set up a separate altar, under the pretense of ecclesiological concerns.

In 1950, Matthaios of Bresthene, who had already (in 1948) consecrated four Bishops on his own (and thus uncanonically), reposed in schism.

In 1951, Germanos of the Cyclades, having returned to him, reposed in communion with Chrysostomos of Phlorina, who had consecrated him.

In 1953, Christophoros of Megara and Polykarpos of Diauleia, who had returned in 1944 to Chrysostomos of Phlorina, returned once more to the official Church.

In the wake of these events, how was Chrysostomos of Phlorina to consecrate Bishops? Aside from the fact that he remained on his own (as a theologian, he knew full well what it meant for a single Bishop to perform Consecrations and what the consequences thereof were), there was the impact on his soul and his emotional sensitivities of what had arisen from the course taken by the Bishops whom he had consecrated. These were among the reasons that he did not undertake new Consecrations.

His nephew, Georgios [George] Kabourides, also writes that his uncle was apprehensive about a rupture in the struggle, and for this reason did not consecrate other Hierarchs. He mentions, in fact, that Metropolitan Chrysostomos told him that if God were to punish him for anything, it would be because he had consecrated these Bishops.[11]

We conclude with an excerpt from the pen of Metropolitan Chrysostomos (a letter to Stavros Karametsos, dated April 24, 1951),[12] in which, in combination with all that we have set forth,

[11] See the reminiscences of Georgios (George) Kabourides in the introduction to what is touted as the third volume of the Ἅπαντα (Complete works) of Metropolitan Chrysostomos (containing addresses and letters in his own hand).

[12] See Stavros Karametsos, *Ὁ Σύγχρονος Ὁμολογητὴς τῆς Ὀρθο-*

he gives a clear response to the question that we posed in our title:

> With regard to the issue of the Consecrations, I refer you to my letter on this subject to Father Akakios,[13] which I conveyed [to him] by your hand. This issue, dear Stavros, does not admit even of discussion, given the conditions under which we live, not having freedom of thought or tranquillity of spirit. It was not at all prudent or profitable for the struggle for Orthodoxy that we should make decisions under such conditions, which are going to cast a shadow on the visage of the sacred struggle that is so resplendent in its principles—this struggle that will occupy a brilliant page in the contemporary history of the Church. This issue, my dear Stavros, will become an object of reflection in due time, when the position of our sacred struggle has been suitably defined in relation to the official Church and the State and we are able to make canonical and valid decisions vis-à-vis the entire Church. We, the Old Calendarists, dear Stavros, both clergy and laity, have now become historic figures on account of the sacred struggle that we wage so honorably and faithfully, and it is not right that thought and, still less, action redolent of self-interest and self-satisfaction under the pretext of ecclesiastical necessity should dim and sully the clear mirror of the principles with which we struggle steadfastly upon the secure ramparts of Orthodoxy. The fears expressed about the lack of an Episcopate…[there is a *lacuna* at this point in the manuscript—trans.]…firmly that our sacred struggle goes on under the supervision and protection of Almighty God, Who ever rouses the champions of the Faith at the right time, lest He leave without defenders the noble and sacred frontline of Orthodoxy, against which the gates of Hades shall not prevail. The slightest deviation on our part from the framework of the boundaries of the divine and sacred Canons established by the Holy Fathers will render us liable before God and history and will take away from us the most essential shield, that is, canonicity and principles.

δοξίας (The contemporary confessor of Orthodoxy), pp. 83-84.

[13] Unfortunately, I do not have this letter in my files. Father Akakios (subsequently consecrated as Bishop of Talantion by two Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad) desired Episcopal Consecration as far back as the period that he was in the Matthewite schism. However, since Matthaios was hesitant to perform more Consecrations, Akakios abandoned him and aligned himself with Metropolitan Chrysostomos, whom he also [without success] pressured to perform Consecrations. From this letter to Karametsos, one can perhaps extrapolate how Metropolitan Chrysostomos may have responded to Father Akakios [i.e., negatively—*Editor*].